

NATIONAL BLACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

August 21, 2002

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., SW
Washington, D. C. 20554

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Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

Re: FCC Docket No. 01-348

Dear Chairman Powell:

On behalf of the National Black Chamber of Commerce (NBCC) I want to express our strong support for the pending merger of EchoStar Communications Corporation and Hughes Electronics Corporation. The NBCC believes the merger, if approved, will greatly enhance access to a broader range of services, at lower costs, including access to high-speed Internet, for all black-owned businesses and African-American families.

Further, the new company would provide stronger market competition to cable television and expanded access to local television channels in all 210 local markets nationwide. In addition, the merged company will have the available spectrum to offer greater diversity in programming to the benefit of all African-Americans.

Approval of the merger would be an important step towards closing the digital divide by providing access to the best communications and information technology for all black-owned businesses nationwide.

Accordingly, on behalf of the over 85,000 black-owned business that represent our membership, I urge you to act expeditiously to approve the merger.

Sincerely,


Harry Alford
President/CEO

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